

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 CAB-09 COME-00 EB-11 FAA-00 DRC-01

AID-20 PC-04 TRSE-00 OMB-01 OPR-02 /169 W

----- 110213

P R 261706Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7236

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L L O M E 0 2 1 5

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TO

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL AIRPLANE CRASH

REF: (A) LOME 0204; (B) LOME 0214

SUMMARY: EXCELLENT SOURCE, WHO SAY EYADEMA YESTERDAY IN LAMA KARA, REPORTS HIM ONLY SLIGHTLY INJURED AND OTHERWISE IN GOOD CONDITION. INFLAMMATORY SPEECH LAST NIGHT BY MININFO EKLO STOPPED JUST SHORT OF CHARGING FOREIGN FINANCIAL INTERESTS WITH HAVING ATTEMPTED MURDER PRESIDENT. IN TAPED STATEMENT, ALSO BROADCAST LAST NIGHT, PRESIDENT, ALTHOUGH IN MORE MODERATE TONE, ALSO APPEARED TO LINK HIS NARROW ESCAPE WITH TOGO'S STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE. LOME IS NVERTHELESS CALM AND IMMEDIATE OUTLOOK IS FOR CONTINUATION OF THIS CONDITION. END SUMMARY.

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1. SOURCE MENTIONED IN PARA 3 REFTEL (A) RETURNED LOME FROM

LAMA KARA LATE LAST NIGHT AFTER HAVING SEEN AND TALKED TO PRESIDENT EYADEMA AT HIS HOUSE IN PIYA AND MINISTERS MALOU AND ALIDOU AT LAMA KARA HOSPITAL. PRESIDENT IS, AS REPORTED IN PRESS AND RADIO, SLIGHTLY INJURED IN FACIAL AREA, BUT OTHERWISE IN APPARENTLY GOOD CONDITION. MALOU AND ALIDOU ARE INJURED BUT APPARENTLY NOT SERIOUSLY, AS EVIDENCED BY THEIR ABILITY RECEIVE VISITORS.

2. ONE DISTURBING THING REPORTED BY SOURCE WAS TENDENCY ON PART OF PRESIDENT TO BLAME COMMANDANT DELAIRE (PROMOTED A FEW DAYS BEFORE ACCIDENT TO LT COL) FOR HAVING "ABANDONED" HIM. APPARENTLY DELAIRE WAS AT PRESIDENT'S SIDE JUST BEFORE LANDING BUT LEFT TO ENTER COCKPIT. PRESIDENT ALSO BELIEVES HIS WELL-KNOWN AND POPULAR BODYGUARD (CALLED "DEGAULLE" BECAUSE OF HIS SIZE), WHO WAS ALSO KILLED, ABANDONED HIM IN FEAR. (FOURTH DEAD, INCIDENTALLY, WAS TOGOLESE CO-PILOT SECOND LIEUTENANT GNEMAGNA. THERE ARE SIX INJURED AT TOKOIN HOSPITAL IN LOME, AT LEAST ONE GRAVELY. TODAY'S TOGO-PRESSE PHOTOGRAPHS OF WRECKED PLANE MAKE ONE MARVEL THAT ANYONE SURVIVED AND WILL LEND CREDENCE TO PAPER'S CLAIM THAT EYADEMA'S SURVIVAL WAS "MIRACLE."

3. UGLIEST ASPECT OF WHOLE AFFAIR HAS BEEN PERFORMANCE OF INFORMATION MINISTER EKLO WHO DELIVERED INFLAMMATORY SPEECH LAST NIGHT (REF A), IN WHICH HE STOPPED JUST SHORT OF ACCUSING FOREIGN FINANCIAL INTERESTS (READ CTMB) OF ATTEMPTING MURDER EYADEMA. (TELEVISION COMMENTATOR WENT EVEN FARTHER LAST NIGHT, REPORTEDLY DESCRIBING CRASH AS ATTEMPT TO KILL PRESIDENT - WHEREAS EKLO MERELY IMPLIED IT.) EVEN BEFORE EKLO'S SPEECH, RUMORS HAD CIRCULATED IN LOME THAT FRENCH WERE BEHIND CRASH. EVERY TOGOLESE, WHETHER HE BELIEVES EKLO OR DISTRUSTS AND DETESTS HIM, AGREES THAT BY "ENEMIES" HE MEANT THE FRENCH. THOSE WHO BELIEVE FRENCH TRIED TO KILL EYADEMA EXPLAIN AWAY DEATHS OF DELAIRE AND CATTIN AS RESULTING FROM THEIR HAVING BEEN TRAPPED IN THEIR OWN PLOT.

4. APPARENTLY WISER HEADS PREVAILED AFTER EKLO'S SPEECH, SINCE THE MOST INFLAMMATORY PORTIONS WERE OMITTED FROM TEXT REPRODUCED IN TOGO-PRESSE THIS MORNING (26 JANUARY). THESE PORTIONS ARE IDENTIFIED IN REF (B), WHICH TRANSMITS COMPLETE TEXT AS BROADCAST. (OWING TO ALERTNESS OF MY WIFE, WE HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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CLEAR AND COMPLETE TAPED TEXT.)

5. MOST EDUCATED TOGOLESE WILL NOT BE MISLED BY EKLO, WHOM MANY CONSIDER A DANGEROUS AND OPPORTUNISTIC DEMAGOGUE. MASS OF UNEDUCATED PEOPLE WILL NOT SO READILY SEE THROUGH HIS ANTICS, HOWEVER. UNFORTUNATELY, PRESIDENT HIMSELF MUST BE COUNTED AMONG THESE. HE IS, AFTER ALL, SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR LETTING EKLO ACHIEVE HIS PRESENT PROMINENCE AND, UNLESS AND UNTIL HE

CUTS HIM DOWN, MUST BE CONSIDERED TO APPROVE HIS METHODS AND TACTICS.

6. PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT, WHICH FOLLOWED EKLO'S AND WHICH WE ALSO HAVE ON TAPE, WAS MORE MODERATELY PHRASED. NEVERTHELESS IT LENDS CREDENCE TO EKLO'S CLAIM THAT ACCIDENT WAS RELATED TO EYADEMA'S STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE OF TOGO. FULL TEXT IS ALSO INCLUDED IN REF (B).

7. FRENCH ARE UNDERSTANDABLY FURIOUS. ONE UNHELPFUL STORY CIRCULATING IN FOREIGN COMMUNITY IS THAT DELAIRE, WHO WAS PLANNING A PARTY 23 JANUARY TO CELEBRATE HIS PROMOTION, WAS REQUIRED BY EYADEMA TO GIVE UP HIS PLANS AT LAST MOMENT AND ACCOMPANY GENERAL TO LAMA KARA. WHEN DELAIRE LEARNED DC-3 WAS TO CARRY MORE THAN ITS CAPACITY OF PASSENGERS, HE OBJECTED TO THIS BUT TO NO AVAIL. AS RESULT, STORY GOES, HE HAD TO STAND AND, BEING WITHOUT SEATBELT, WAS KILLED. (BODYGUARD'S DEATH LENDS SOME CREDENCE TO THIS, SINCE PRESUMABLY, IF DELAIRE WAS WITHOUT SEAT OR BELT, SO WAS HE.)

8. DESPITE UNPLEASANTNESS OF SITUATION, I DO NOT EXPECT IT TO DETERIORATE AT ANY EARLY DATE TO STAGE OF ORGANIZED DISTURBANCES AGAINST FOREIGNERS. (IN THIS COUNTRY A GROUP DISTURBANCE WOULD NORMALLY REQUIRE ASSENT IF NOT ACTIVE SUPPORT OF MILITARY.) IF, HOWEVER, PRESIDENT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE EKLO FOR DEMAGOGUE HE IS, TREND WILL INEVITABLY BE TOWARD HOSTILITY TO FOREIGNERS. MY TOGOLESE FRIENDS OF ALL CLASSES ASSURE ME THAT THIS CANNOT HAPPEN AND THAT EKLO, IF NOT EYADEMA, IS A PASSING PHENOMENON, THAT HE IS SIMPLY NOT A REPRESENTATIVE TOGOLESE. I AGREE TO LATTER POINT: I HAVE NEVER IN MY LONG CAREER IN FOREIGN SERVICE LIVED AMONG A FRIENDLIER, MORE HOSPITABLE, AND LESS PREJUDICED PEOPLE. DICKINSON

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